



**CityLinks Leader with Associates
Cooperative Agreement
GEW-A-00-03-0002
ICMA Project No. 730.001.01.C2C**

USAID Quarterly Report I

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CityLinks Program

Leader with Associate Cooperative Agreement

Cooperative Agreement No. GEW-A-00-03-0002

Project No. 730.001.01.C2C

Start Date: March 2003

Program Manager: Melissa Speed, mspeed@icma.org

I. Introduction

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) the sum of \$999,829 to provide support over a five-year period for the CityLinks Program. Rapid urbanization poses tremendous challenges to meet the goals of sustainable economic and environmental growth in cities throughout the world. The global trend of decentralization affords local authorities greater responsibility and accountability to address critical development issues, such as health, environment, economic development, and fiscal policy. However, local government officials are often ill-prepared to assume and carry out the greater responsibilities that rapid decentralization expects of them.

To overcome these global challenges, the CityLinks Program builds on the lessons learned from the Resource Cities Program and continues to harness the expertise and technical resources of U.S. municipal governments and local government officials to bring effective and lasting change to developing and transitional countries. The Program provides an expanded menu of models to deliver appropriate, targeted, cost effective, and sustainable support to local governments, NGOs, and communities in order to assist them in developing the technical and management skills they need to improve the quality of life of their citizens.

II. Major Accomplishments This Quarter

The following accomplishments have been achieved in the various work plan components listed below.

Outreach to USAID

ICMA held its first of four outreach sessions on February 6, 2006. The initial meeting was held to introduce representatives from urban programs to the CityLinks Program. Initial feedback was positive, although staff felt that the presentation was too long. Instead, it was suggested that ICMA meet with individual desk officers to briefly discuss the merits of the program. It was also suggested that the presentation should not be so centered on Afghanistan and that staff from different programs should be on hand to discuss the accomplishments achieved. From this meeting, there was definite interest from Mike Enders. He felt that the program would be useful for countries in West Africa. The CTO and Mike Enders have met with the desk officers and there seemed to be interest at this time.

USAID/Serbia has contacted Jessica to discuss a CityLinks Program to build from the existing MEGA program. The mission is still waiting on final budget information, but initial discussions mention available funding of \$250,000 to \$750,000. The total will depend on available funding.

The program will promote public diplomacy and will work with cities previously identified through the MEGA Program. ICMA serves as a subcontractor for this project. Depending on funding, the program may serve two to four cities and may provide technical assistance in the areas of water and energy and/or tourism and environmental standards. ICMA will work with the CTO to determine additional opportunities for outreach.

South-South Knowledge Sharing

A 15-member delegation from Afghanistan traveled to the Indian cities of Hyderabad and Ahmedabad to take part in a 10-day study tour (February 18 – 28, 2006). The delegation was led by the Honorable Deputy Mayor of Kabul. The delegation was split into the following three groups: Greening for Parks and Gardens; Solid Waste Management and Drainage; and Traffic Management, Road Construction and Maintenance. Overall, the study tour was very successful. The delegates plan to utilize certain concepts gained through participation in the study tour in their day-to-day operations. Such concepts include: the door-to-door trash collection method; the use of the private sector for rehabilitation and improvement activities; power production from solid waste; the covering of ditches and road expansion to alleviate traffic congestion; the production of fertilizer from leaves and dead plants; and the participation of the private sector in the greening of parks and gardens.

While in Hyderabad, the Afghan delegation discussed the seven essential steps needed to improve solid waste management deficiencies. These rules include: storage of waste that separates biodegradable waste and material that may be recycled; collection of biodegradable waste to be collected daily using containerized tricycles/carts/pick-up vans; daily street sweeping for residential and commercial areas regardless of holidays; provision of closed body waste storage depots; and the daily transportation of waste by covered vehicles.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure the continued success of the CityLinks Program. Each quarter, ICMA conducts a review to discuss technical, programmatic and financial accomplishments and challenges. These reviews will be used to identify red flags and suggested activities and solutions. ICMA had developed a SOW for the mid-term assessment consultant. In addition, ICMA had identified a possible consultant to begin work in spring 2006. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints this activity has been postponed. It is not possible to implement this activity with the existing funding constraints. ICMA will continue to monitor and evaluate program progress through the above mentioned quarterly reviews and monthly meetings with CityLinks staff.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

Faye Haselkorn has accepted another position with the USAID Mission in Indonesia. As a result, Jessica Tulodo will serve as the new CTO for the CityLinks Leader. Ms. Tulodo has worked with ICMA through the Resource Cities Program in Indonesia. On March 7, 2006, ICMA received notice of USAID funding constraints that will impact the ability of ICMA to implement the Leader activities in full. The notice explained that the Urban Programs team had received major cuts this fiscal year, making the annual obligation of \$200,000 impossible. At this time, it is expected that similar cuts will occur in fiscal years 2007 and 2008.

Jon Bormet and Melissa Speed met with Ms. Tulodo to discuss ways to precede with the Leader activities, although on a much limited scale. It was agreed that ICMA should use the existing balance to cover costs associated with labor. The remaining balance is to be used as a bridge until additional CityLinks programs are awarded. At that time, ICMA will return to a management structure first used under the Resource Cities Program. ICMA will provide for marketing, production and oversight costs through the individual awards. The budgets will include line items to assist with the costs related to drafting, production and design of the annual report and case studies. ICMA is now in the process of revising the annual work plan to reflect the funding constraints. ICMA and the CTO will work together to finalize the revised action plan.

In addition, ICMA learned of a new requirement that may also impact current and future programs. ICMA has been informed of the J-1 visa requirement. This new policy states that any participant traveling to the US must hold a J-1 visa. This policy is needed whether the length of stay is one day or a year. ICMA is now in the process of understanding the policy so that we can ensure that the policy is implemented. USAID expects that each request may take anywhere from one to eight weeks to process. This may require that ICMA develop programs that differ from the original model of international exchanges. Hopefully, we will be able to develop programs that utilize south-south learning, study tours, and international exchanges. This may also be difficult for those programs where public diplomacy is a priority. These will certainly be considerations as ICMA moves forward with the CityLinks Program.

IV. Projected Activities

Outreach to USAID

ICMA drafted an article for USAID's *Frontlines* publication. The article highlighted the CityLinks Program in Afghanistan and its work in trash collection and solid waste management. The article was published in the April edition of *Frontlines*. An article is also expected to appear in ICMA's *PM Magazine* in May to highlight the CityLinks Program in Thailand that partnered the cities of Chiang Mai, Kohn Kaen, and Phuket with Portland, Oregon.

Outreach to Citizens and Public Officials

An important marketing piece is the CityLinks annual report, which includes program accomplishments and highlights for each associate award. The most recent annual report was completed in mid-March.

For more information about the CityLinks Program, contact:

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CityLinks Partnership: Adama & Dire Dawa, Ethiopia – Portland, Oregon

Start Date: September 2005

Partnership Manager: Kelly Niewenhous, kniewenhous@icma.org

Focus Area: Local Economic Development

Funding Source: USAID/Ethiopia

I. Introduction

ICMA's CityLinks Program will provide technical assistance to the Municipalities of Adama and Dire Dawa in the areas of local economic development, tourism and revenue generation to strengthen the municipalities' ability to respond to the challenges of urban poverty and food insecurity. The CityLinks program will build more sustainable and self-dependent communities that will be able to address the chronic economic development needs of their citizens.

The Municipality of Adama has a population of 200,000 and boasts a growth rate of six percent per annum. It is located near the Rift Valley resort area, considered by many as an archaeological paradise. The City offers a temperate climate and natural attractions, such as hot springs, and is considered an economic hub with the potential to address urban and rural food insecurity. Despite these assets, the city is contending with increasing rates of urban poverty and urban food insecurity. Thus, the city is committed to improving the provision of water, sanitation, and sustainable developments to create job opportunities and ultimately reduce poverty and its effects on Adama's urban and rural populations.

Dire Dawa is a well-structured city in which a strong interdependence exists between its rural and urban areas. It is described as one city and nine Qabelas, or agricultural communities. While the Qabelas occupy 97 percent of the land area, they are home to only 30 percent of the city's 370,000 population. The city of Dire Dawa, which occupies the remaining three percent of the land, but must provide housing for 70 percent of the population. Reducing the rate of unemployment is of critical importance to the city and essential to achieving its 20 year goal of becoming the center of trade and commerce in Ethiopia.

The program will provide for five technical exchanges to provide assistance in two to three similar priority areas per city. It is ICMA's expectation that a partnership will be created not only between the Ethiopian municipalities and their U.S. counterparts, but also between the Ethiopian cities of Adama and Dire Dawa. Through this partnership, the cities will be able to share lessons learned and provide assistance when challenges are encountered.

The City of Adama has identified the following priority areas:

- Addressing food insecurity through increased and improved local economic development and increased opportunities for the city's youth population.
- Improving service delivery through improved waste management and the provision of water and sanitation.
- Increasing revenue through IT training, the development of municipal staff operations, training in property tax, cadastre, and GIS (graphical information systems), improved financial management, and policy review.

The City of Dire Dawa has identified the following priority areas:

- Increasing revenue.
- Improving water and wastewater service delivery, as well as developing a mechanism for assessing and collecting fees for service.
- Improving employment opportunities for the city's youth.

All cities have identified the need for technical assistance and training in the areas of revenue generation, financial management, local economic development, and water and sanitation. These areas will provide the foundation of the CityLinks Program.

Suggested results that can be anticipated through this program include:

- Creation of a youth employment service bureau and identification of required job skills to promote youth employment.
- Implementation of a comprehensive waste management plan and capital projects plan for water and wastewater improvements, including long-term financing and debt reduction through service fees.
- Identification of the legal authority of local governments to generate revenue and identify sources of revenue such as service fees, regulatory fees, tourist revenues (e.g., hotel occupancy taxes), and private property taxes.
- Development of annual and five-year operating and capital budgets, accounting standards, and a policy review/analysis mechanism to ensure budgets are in line with the cities' strategic plans.
- In addition, the CityLinks Program will work closely with the municipalities to develop and implement an overall financial strategy.

Following the initial exchange, the cities will finalize the program priorities and define expected outcomes.

II. Major Accomplishments this Period

ICMA identified the City of Portland, Oregon to partner with the participating cities in Ethiopia. Portland brings a wealth of expertise in all city functions and past experience as a participant in a CityLinks Program in Thailand and as a Resource Cities partner.

Two ICMA staff and the Facilities Manager from the City of Portland began work in Addis Ababa and Adama in March to identify issues facing the cities, initiatives currently undertaking to solve their problems, and areas where assistance was needed. In Addis Ababa, the main problem areas were defined as water scarcity and leakage, unemployment, housing/land allocation and shortage, and political turmoil. In Adama, the main issues were flooding and lack of proper sewerage treatment and drainage, unemployment and poverty, and housing.

ICMA was also tasked with providing an assessment of the political transition's effect on city services in Addis Ababa and how donors could mitigate some of the interruptions and vulnerabilities during the transition. ICMA debriefed USAID and the US Ambassador, as well as representatives from the donor community in Ethiopia. A report was submitted to USAID

outlining the main vulnerabilities facing Addis as well as ways donors could intervene through targeted assistance to support the transition.

ICMA and USAID jointly decided to exclude Dire Dawa from the partnership at this time under the premise that the funding will be better spent in two rather than three cities.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

There has been a delayed start to the program due to a political vacuum in Ethiopia, primarily affecting Addis Ababa where the incoming Mayor is currently in jail and the Council members of the majority party have refused to begin working. Therefore, without a Mayor or Council and with the premise that the City Manager and other staff will likely lose their jobs when the new mayor and Council do begin, it has been difficult to start the program.

ICMA will begin activities in the City of Adama which is stable at this time and when the incoming Mayor and Council (and civil servants) begin their work in Addis, ICMA will fold them into the program with a specific project in Addis Ababa.

IV. Projected Activities

ICMA will provide USAID with a revised program description based on the findings from the assessment trip in Addis Ababa and Adama. Some suggestions include possibly linking the Ethiopian cities with cities in India that have tackled similar problems (water and drainage) successfully, providing internships in Portland for technical staff, and supporting an Ethiopian professional city management network. ICMA will travel to Addis Ababa in May for a visit with the incoming Mayor and Council to determine what their priorities are and begin the program there. It is anticipated that in June city officials from Adama and Addis will travel to Portland on the first exchange, at which time a specific project will be identified and an action plan completed.

ICMA will also request a no-cost extension for the program to make up for lost time due to political instability.

CityLinks Partnership: South African Cities Network – Virginia Beach, Virginia

Start Date: August 2004

Partnership Manager: Kelly Niewenhaus, kniewenhaus@icma.org

Focus Area: Local Economic Development

Funding Source: USAID/South Africa

I. Introduction

The city of Virginia Beach, Virginia, and the South African Cities Network (SACN) have entered into a partnership under the auspices of USAID/South Africa and CityLinks to help strengthen the capacity of three South African municipalities in their local economic development (LED) efforts.

The objective of the partnership is to help the staff in the Municipalities of Mangaung, Buffalo City, and Msunduzi to be more effective at promoting local economic development and tourism and to engage local stakeholders and institutions to plan and implement LED strategies. The South African cities are working with Virginia Beach to study the best practices for promoting LED in Hampton Roads, a region in the southeastern part of the United States, in order to learn how to improve LED in South Africa. There will also be a reciprocal visit by participating US representatives to South Africa to participate in an event where best practices from the partnership will be shared. This CityLinks program will also help SACN strengthen its capacity to support its membership in the area of LED.

In the original work plan, three exchanges were anticipated; however, during the second exchange it was determined that the implementation strategy should be altered to accommodate the ongoing work that needs to be done in the South African cities, vis-à-vis implementing specific project activities in the area of local economic development.

Two exchanges have taken place, the first focusing on tourism and the second on local economic development project implementation. At the end of the second exchange, ICMA, SACN, and the participating cities agreed to eliminate a third exchange to make way for continued assistance from US managers in the area of economic development for the cities of Mangaung, Buffalo City, and Msunduzi.

Exchanges held:

August 19-24, 2005: Virginia Beach, VA

October 10-14, 2005: Virginia Beach, VA

January 23-February 11, 2006: South Africa (targeted technical assistance)

II. Major Accomplishments this Period

This quarter, the three participating cities in South Africa each identified a specific project to further develop and implement with assistance from their US counterparts. Three US consultants were recruited by ICMA and each spent three weeks in his counterpart city in South Africa: Mark Wawner, Project Development Officer, City of Virginia Beach, VA, worked with the City of Msunduzi; Derrick Woody, Great Streets Coordinator, Washington, DC, was paired with the City of Mangaung; and David Seamon, Asst. City Manager, Kansas City, MO, worked with Buffalo City. Each team collaborated to identify specific projects in the host cities and to develop action plans to implement the projects: a comprehensive city-wide economic development strategy in Msunduzi, a private sector development organization and business retention program in Buffalo City, and a corridor development plan in Mangaung. Each consultant worked directly in the host city with the LED department and other staff and officials, and then continued to work collaboratively via email and phone to complete and strengthen the action plans.

Also during the first quarter, ICMA and SACN prepared for the Local Economic Development Symposium to be held in early April in Buffalo City. The theme of the event was, “Accelerated and Shared Growth in South African Cities: From Policy to Practice.” The venue was selected, the agenda finalized and participants and speakers were invited. Case studies and presentations were also finalized for the event.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

N/A

IV. Projected Activities

The LED Symposium took place April 3-4 in Buffalo City. The event highlighted successful LED practices in the US and South Africa through the presentation of case studies and open roundtable discussions. Main objectives of the symposium were: to discuss national policy on LED, specifically ASGISA and LED guidelines developed by DPLG; to share case studies from the USAID-funded CityLinks LED knowledge-exchange program facilitated by SACN and ICMA, and to share World Bank-funded case studies on pro-poor LED strategies conducted for DPLG by Khanya-aicc. Participants at the two-day event included LED managers from SACN cities and other urban areas, national government departments dealing with LED, LED managers from Virginia Beach, and donor agencies. A comprehensive report and analysis of the event will be completed for submission to USAID, as well as for broader dissemination in South Africa.

ICMA will complete the final report for the South Africa CityLinks Program in the next quarter.

Partnership: Global Program to Strengthen the Kabul Municipality

Start Date: November 2004

Partnership Manager: Asli Failmezger afailmezger@icma.org

Funding Source: USAID/Afghanistan

I. Introduction

USAID/Afghanistan awarded ICMA a two-year program totaling \$2,000,000 to support the sustainable transformation of post-war Afghanistan by strengthening the capacity of the Municipality of Kabul to provide essential services to its citizens. The program will provide technical assistance and training in the areas of sanitation, streets, park rehabilitation, street side “greening,” inter-departmental coordination and capacity building for Kabul staff. ICMA-Kabul has been working in District 4 within Kabul Municipality to enhance efforts to maintain infrastructure, such as streets, sidewalks, drainage facilities and parks, and to provide environmental services like trash collection and sewer maintenance. ICMA has also been implementing a weekly door-to-door trash collection system within a pilot area of District 4. Over the past quarter, service has been extended to 3,000 households. The staff has opened a base of operations in the city of Kabul’s Sanitation Department.

The program objectives are:

Training

- The Resident Practitioners will lead monthly training sessions for city employees to address basic management and engineering practices

Sanitation

- ICMA will analyze current trash collection and transportation practices to develop a routing plan and work methodology to allow trash to be collected weekly.

Streets

- ICMA will initiate a pavement management system to analyze streets and develop a plan to patch cracked sealing, resurfacing and paving.

Parks and Recreation

- ICMA has identified Park Shahre-Now, to renovate.
- ICMA will replicate Kabul’s greening initiatives and will create additional methods/practices for ground cover and landscaping.

II. Major Accomplishments This Period

Under the supervision of Mr. Mohammed Afzal Qayoumi, the ICMA Kabul office is proceeding with the program objectives: 1) Trash collection, 2) Ditch cleaning, 3) Street maintenance, and 4) Parks and Recreation.

South to South Study Tour:

A 15-member delegation led by Deputy Major of Kabul Honorable Mr. Bahram Fageer and COP ICMA-Kabul Afzal Qayoumi visited India for a study tour to learn best practices of Indian city governments with emphasis on park development, solid waste management, traffic management and street maintenance. The Indian cities of Hyderabad and Ahmedabad were selected to take part in the study tour, as these cities have undertaken several innovative measures to improve their urban governance. The objective of this study tour was to demonstrate to the Afghan municipal officials and ICMA-Kabul engineering technicians how their Indian colleagues have resolved the city's major issues. The Kabul delegation included 15 participants (seven from Kabul Municipality, two from Kabul Traffic, and six from ICMA-Kabul). The study tour had three objectives:

1. *Solid Waste Management:*

Through presentations, the Afghanistan delegation learned how to convert solid waste into energy, to treat and reuse waste water, and to enhance sustainability through the involvement of the private sector.

2. *Roadway Development and Traffic Management:*

The delegation visited a street design center, street development projects, a special facility created for quick road construction projects, and a commercial road. They were introduced to cost recovery tools like roadside advertising rights and parking fees for investment recovery purposes. They were also shown how traffic can be regulated in the city, to educate the public on traffic sense and ways to manage junctions effectively. The delegation also visited a traffic park developed by the city police to educate the public about the traffic signs and signals.

3. *Parks and Greenery Department:*

The Afghan delegation visited large parks, lakesides and riverfronts to observe how they were created using private sector participation and ways to generate revenue that then can be used to self-finance the projects and receive additional income.

Trash Collection:

Pilot activities for trash collection and ditch cleaning began in 2005. To date, the trash collection activity has been extended to include 3,600 households in District 4 and 3,000 households in District 10. The ICMA-Kabul team, in collaboration with the Kabul municipality, is picking up trash Saturday through Wednesday, from 7:30 am to 2:50 pm. Kabul municipality provides three dump trucks with the volume of 4.8 to 5.8 cubic meters, and 21 workers to carry out the trash collection activities. ICMA is providing incentives for the workers who receive certificates of participation.

Approximately 33 kilometers of garbage is disposed of at the city's largest dumpsite in Chamtalla (from District 4). In order to further extend the collection area, ICMA contracted a private organization and rented three additional vehicles and hired 42 laborers. The trash collection activities have been extended to District 10 rather than covering the rest of the District 4, as CARE, a large private international humanitarian organization, is operating in that area.

Trash collection efforts in District 10 began in early March with the distribution of info-booklets to explain trash collection efforts to houses in the area.

Sanitation Drainage System Ditch Cleaning:

Within that same pilot area, the ICMA-Kabul team continues to offer ditch cleaning and trash removal to the city dumpsite in Chamtalla in collaboration with Kabul municipality. Kabul municipality has provided 21 municipal workers and one dump truck to assist with these efforts. Ditch cleaning is done in two steps: 1) removing trash, debris and sediment from ditches, and 2) transportation of waste to the city dumpsite in Chamtalla the following day. As trash collection and ditch cleaning activities have expanded to District 10 ICMA has provided two additional trucks and 20 laborers.

Street Maintenance and Traffic:

Since a large number of Afghan refugees are returning to the country, the population of Kabul is growing rapidly thus causing traffic congestion. ICMA-Kabul has organized a team of ten workers to repair potholes and cracks as a model in District 4. The ICMA team has begun traffic improvement on two main corridors of District 4, Taimani Street and Kolola Pusht Street. A traffic inventory and survey of Taimani Street and Kolola Pusht Street were also completed to gain a better understanding of existing conditions. ICMA has developed an agreement with the street sign company to produce and place additional signs on District 4's main thoroughfares. The traffic improvement and signage efforts are continuing in the district.

Parks and Recreation:

Park Shahre-Now rehabilitation efforts have begun. During this quarter, Joe Roller, Landscape Architect for the City of Kettering, Ohio, traveled to Kabul to provide hands-on technical assistance with the park rehabilitation efforts. While Joe was in Kabul, the work on the entry pathway to the center of the park got underway. The entryway, center of the park, playground and the garden adjacent to the playground were cleaned, and the pathway was defined and grass planting was completed in some areas of the park.

Administrative:

During this quarter, ICMA resubmitted the realignment request to USAID that included a proposal to extend project activities to other districts. Activities in the next quarter will be affected should ICMA receive approval from USAID.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

The main challenge is the development of a cost-effective, sustainable system for trash collection, sanitation, and street maintenance. The second challenge is collaborating with Kabul Municipality. Due to the elections, Kabul Municipality was reluctant to assist with the expansion efforts.

- Expansion of trash collection efforts has been difficult because Kabul Municipality was reluctant to allow ICMA-Kabul workers to use the transfer station. If the conflict is not resolved soon, it will be necessary to build a separate transfer station for the trash collection efforts.
- Upon direction from the mayor and the reluctance of the greenery and roads departments to provide municipal staff, ICMA-Kabul hired temporary help for the road repairs and park rehabilitation efforts. This poses a major challenge to increase institutional capacity within the municipality.
- Kabul municipality has not agreed to provide asphalt for ICMA to repair potholes, which has delayed the implementation of street activities. ICMA has identified a private company in order to purchase asphalt.
- Some Kabul citizens do not support the roadside work, which limits progress in roadside construction activities.

IV. Projected Activities

As the program expands, the efforts to ensure that the processes and methods used are sustainable gains importance.

If USAID approves ICMA's proposal to expand activities, ICMA-Kabul will need to establish a second office in the Greenery Department. Three more engineering technicians will be hired and located in the second office.

Production of a video is underway to will include the India study tour for sustainability purposes. If USAID approves the proposed extension and provides additional funding, a second Indian study tour will be scheduled.

Mr. Asnani, a solid waste expert and an ICMA-SA consultant, will travel to Kabul to assist the Afghanistan office in developing sustainable solid waste management. In addition, in order to gauge a possible privatization of the solid waste management efforts, Barry B. Edwards, PE, Director of Utilities & Engineering in Catawba County, NC, will also travel to Kabul in May.

During the next quarter, ICMA will continue signage activities as part of the street maintenance component. Street repair and maintenance, roadway development, and traffic management efforts will continue. ICMA will also continue to focus on park rehabilitation activities, such as the installation of pavers, establishment of walkways, repairing and replacing the playground equipment, and repairing and purchasing lights.

Partnership: Post Tsunami Recovery Plans for Cuddalore and Nagapattinam-Tamil Nadu, India

Start Date: August 2005

Program Manager: Jami Sachs Spykerman, jsachs@icma.org

Focus Area: Post-Tsunami Recovery Assistance

Funding Source: USAID/India

I. Introduction

On December 26, 2004, the Indian coastline experienced the most devastating tsunami in recorded history. The tsunami was triggered by an earthquake of magnitude 9.0 on the Richter scale, off the coast of Sumatra, in the Indonesian Archipelago. Almost all the countries located around the Bay of Bengal were affected. In India, the loss of life and property in India was massive. Nearly 80 percent of the deaths along India's southern coast were centered in the State of Tamil Nadu, which also incurred approximately two-thirds of the property damage. Within Tamil Nadu, the Cities of Nagapattinam and Cuddalore incurred much of the worst damage and loss of life. These two communities form the focus point of this CityLinks Partnership Program, which is providing technical assistance to the municipalities, the Districts of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam, the State of Tamil Nadu, and relevant state and national ministries engaged in coastal management and tsunami recovery.

Florida, like Tamil Nadu, must continuously prepare for natural disasters. 2004 was one of the worst years in history for the state, as it was battered by a series of unrelenting hurricanes emanating from the Atlantic Ocean. Like India, local and regional government officials are on the frontlines of disaster recovery. Cities like Port Orange, Palm Beach Gardens, and Palm Bay have first-hand disaster response experience and as a result, have been selected as partners to work with their colleagues in the cities of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam, as well as with district officials, to help prepare for and mitigate future disasters. The program will provide hands-on technical assistance, capacity building, and focused exchanges, complemented by small and targeted project assistance funding to support the recovery of these communities.

II. Major Accomplishments This Period

Visit of Indian Officials to Florida

State, district and city officials from Tamil Nadu, accompanied by the ICMA South Asia and ICMA DC staff, visited Florida from January 29-February 4, 2006. The City of Cuddalore was paired with the City of Port Orange, and the City of Nagapattinam was paired with the City of Palm Bay. The visit provided the Indian delegation with the opportunity to see firsthand how cities in Florida create and implement disaster preparedness plans. In addition, the delegation was exposed to development strategies for building sustainable local economies.

By drawing upon the real-life experiences of their communities, Florida officials shared the lessons they have learned to help India's local leaders prepare for and mitigate the effects of future disasters. The Indian delegations from both cities visited the Emergency Operations Centers of Palm Bay and Port Orange, respectively, where they were given presentations on the

various components of disaster planning and mitigation. They were also given tours of water utility operations, retention ponds, city parks and dune restoration sites.

As a result of the exchange, a revised work plan was drafted and program activities and technical assistance efforts were narrowed down to allow for the implementation of tangible results-oriented activities. In addition, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam officials requested assistance in designing and implementing a model street program in their cities. The updated work plan, therefore, includes the development of pilot projects in each city to redesign and implement a model street program to promote economic development and enhance tourism.

GIS Map

A final round of verification was conducted to insure that the GIS maps reflect the ground reality of both Indian cities. The maps were discussed in detail with Cuddalore and Nagapattinam's municipal engineers, who provided clarifications as necessary. The verification provided the final demarcation of drainage lines, residential areas, water bodies, street names, overhead water tanks, ward boundaries, and the overall municipal boundary. The maps will be used to guide disaster management, flood mitigation, coastal management and park redevelopment efforts in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam, and will provide both cities with current information on city land, buildings and municipal drainage.

Disaster Management

ICMA staff met with staff from the UNDP program to coordinate disaster management efforts. The meeting included representatives from the Government of Tamil Nadu, USAID, UNDP and ICMA. The purpose of the meeting was to better define the UNDP program activities and to share ICMA program activities in order to ensure that assistance efforts are complementary. UNDP is in the process of developing hand drawn community based maps that identify low lying/vulnerable areas, evacuation routes and buildings that can be used for emergency purposes. These maps will be circulated among the citizen disaster management committees that will prepare resource maps, vulnerability maps and safety/hazard maps. ICMA is in the process of finalizing the GIS base maps for Cuddalore and Nagapattinam and has agreed to provide copies of the maps to UNDP for their reference. In turn, UNDP will provide copies of their community-based maps, which can then be layered on the GIS maps. This will provide Cuddalore and Nagapattinam with more comprehensive maps and integrate the ICMA and UNDP disaster management programs. ICMA will continue to coordinate with UNDP in disaster management efforts.

Eco-Restoration and Park Redevelopment

ICMA solicited the advisory services of a consultant from Auroville, Tamil Nadu, to visit Cuddalore in order to identify the need and necessary components for ecological restoration/natural protection of the coastal areas, to provide recommendations on dune restoration and to find re-use opportunities for debris left over from the tsunami. Local ICMA staff has discussed eco-restoration activities and have begun the review of the technical proposal submitted by the consultant.

ICMA has contracted with Leathers and Associates, a company that has worked closely with communities to build more than 1,600 unique, safe playgrounds. ICMA began working with

Leathers & Associates to plan and conduct design day sessions in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam. Local staff in India has organized and developed the agenda for the design day sessions and have arranged for children of the community and other stakeholders to participate in designing playgrounds for their cities. A designer from Leathers and Associates left for India on March 31st to conduct the design days.

Flood Mitigation

Data related to all ponds in Nagapattinam was collected from the municipality, as well as from the site visits. This data covered details such as the number of ponds in the city, their volume, their current status in terms of encroachment, and their historic connections, if any. All ponds identified were marked on the base maps of both Cuddalore and Nagapattinam to understand their drainage patterns and connections. Two ponds were identified as potential demonstration and pilot areas where storm water drainage could be made more efficient.

Improved Services

Improved citizen access to water supply

Water samples were collected from both Cuddalore and Nagapattinam and submitted to the TWAD board lab at Chennai to study its biological, chemical and heavy metals, in order to determine the quality of the water consumed by the end user through the following sources:

- Piped water
- Ground water
- Tanker water
- Public fountains

Documentation and preliminary analysis of the test results was completed and submitted to the municipalities. Based on the results, ICMA worked with the municipal health officers and municipal engineers on improvement of the existing water supply system. In addition, a water supply distribution network map has been included in the base maps. Accuracy of the drawing will be verified by ICMA staff, with the help of the municipal engineers, during the first week of April.

Citizens' survey

A survey instrument was developed to learn why some people pay for water while some do not. The questionnaire was finalized and translated into Tamil. A local firm was contracted to conduct the survey. Training of the survey team, data entry team and supervisors was undertaken by Mr. Tom Miller, President of the National Research Center, in Chennai from February 13-15, 2006. The survey instrument was pre-tested in Cuddalore and necessary changes were identified and incorporated into an amended survey instrument. The survey was conducted in both Cuddalore and Nagapattinam and data entry was completed in March.

Once the data has been cleaned and the entries finalized, NRC will begin analysis of the information. The information and analysis from the survey will provide valuable information as to why citizens pay or do not pay for water and service delivery improvements needed to increase revenue collection by the city.

Financial Management

ICRA, a financial management consulting services firm, was contracted and began working with the municipalities on financial management reconciliation and training. As part of its subcontract and ICMA's overall financial management assistance, two full-time accountants are working in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam to help both municipalities update their accounting systems, provide financial management training to local government staff and to provide recommendations on ways to improve collection and property tax billing. Starting in mid-February, the accountants began working with municipal staff to regularize the tax systems and reconcile accounting procedures. During the first week, with the help of ICMA staff, the team studied the existing accounting systems, auditing procedures, the balance sheets, cash transactions, collections, municipality systems in administering the accounts, sources of income for the municipalities, and human resources allocated to financial management. The contractor also met with the municipal commissioners, bill collectors and accounting staff to discuss staff requirements for updating records and registers.

Ms. Uma Ramesh, Director of Finance, ICMA Washington, and ICMA South Asia staff met with the Commissioner of Municipal Administration (CMA) in Chennai on March 3, 2006, to update him on the financial management activities and to receive his comments on the work progress. The CMA approved the ongoing activities and made recommendations for future financial management work that will be incorporated into the assistance provided to Cuddalore and Nagapattinam.

Model Streets

Cuddalore and Nagapattinam are working to establish "model" streets that incorporate new and improved street designs and right-of-way management (including street striping, signage, parking, walking areas/sidewalks, lighting, trash collection, and drainage). Half-kilometer street segments will be redesigned and improved in each city to serve as a model for economic development and service delivery. ICMA began working with the Commissioners and Municipal Engineers in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam to identify the streets that will be selected for development. Site visits were conducted to identify the streets, land and existing conditions.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

N/A

IV. Projected Activities

- A designer from Leathers & Associates will meet with citizens, community leaders and children in Nagapattinam and Cuddalore to develop plans and design the playground sites in April. A landscape architect will be identified and a concept design is slated to be completed by mid-June 2006.
- A local agency will be identified to update and house the GIS maps by June 2006.
- An initial assessment report will be submitted by the financial consultants and cross-verification of fixed asset accounts, loan accounts, other receivables, other liabilities and property tax reconciliation of both municipalities will be completed. Recommendations for improving accounting processes and property tax reforms will be submitted by June 2006.

- Water testing and analysis for remaining zones in both Nagapattinam and Cuddalore will be completed. Outcomes of the Citizens Survey will be analyzed by the beginning of May 2006.
- Flood-prone areas determined by the cities' history and contours will be identified and mapped by the end of June 2006. Likewise, temporary shelter locations will also be identified.
- Efforts are ongoing to obtain necessary approvals to start work on the model street segments of both cities. A detailed survey of the segments will be undertaken and consultants will be selected by May 2006.

Partnership: Tirana, Albania & Catawba County, North Carolina

Start Date: September 2005

Program Manager: Daniela Kissova dkissova@icma.org

Focus Area: Solid Waste Management

Funding Source: USAID/Tirana

I. Introduction

The second phase of the partnership between Tirana, Albania, and Catawba County, North Carolina, began in September 2005, and is a follow-up of a two-year program that ended in September 2004. Achievements of Phase 1 include: improved environmental conditions and maintenance of Tirana's landfill and extension of its life through better operations; improved management of Tirana's infrastructure assets; a model practice for more cost-effective contracting with the private sector for waste collection services; and a pilot waste containerization program.

A main focus of the second partnership phase is to further reduce the waste spillovers from existing collection containers and to clean the streets of Tirana and its public right-of-ways from increasing litter. Activities will be two-pronged: a) streamlining the city's waste collection operations, and b) raising citizen awareness of their role in the disposal of waste and of city disposal schedules. Another component of the partnership is to assist Tirana in the creation of a Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste reuse and recycling program, both as a means to promote a cleaner city and as a remedy to the already overburdened local landfill. A third component of the program includes providing Tirana with a process for landfill site selection based on sound financial strategies and state-of-the-art environmental disposal practices.

The work plan defines the following objectives:

Solid Waste Collection, Disposal and Recycling Program

Improve Tirana's solid waste management system and create a recycling education program that will help reduce the waste stream that flows into the Sharra landfill.

A Construction and Demolition (C&D) operation that will help minimize the industrial waste stream flowing into the Sharra landfill.

Waste reduction, reuse and recycling are important components of a sustainable building and development program in Tirana, as there has been extensive illegal demolition of public structures in Tirana over the last few years.

Assist Tirana in selecting a new landfill site and explore options for a regionalized disposal operation.

The remaining life of the Sharra landfill is estimated at around five years. Catawba will provide Tirana with a formal process for identifying suitable properties and best practices in selecting sites with minimal solid waste disposal cost and environmental/human health risks. Catawba will also assist Tirana with analyzing costs and benefits from initiating a regional approach to solid waste collection and disposal. As part of this task, Catawba will help organize

conference(s) or workshops with other Albanian municipalities, in order to explore interests in creating economies of scale through regionalized solid waste operations.

II. Major Accomplishments This Period

Barry Edwards, Catawba County Director of Public Works, Joseph Wiseman, ICMA Solid Waste pro-bono consultant, and ICMA technical adviser Sue Cosner visited Tirana the week of March 12th to finalize the partnership work plan and to commence activities within the technical areas.

The team's scope of work was:

SW Collection, Disposal, and Recycling Activities:

- To analyze waste streams and volumes by assessing collection points, waste collectors, collection periods, routing, truck size and load, large waste generators, and landfill activities, and use findings to improve waste collection frequency, locations, and container sizes.
- To review Tirana's new collection contracts with private waste collectors and provide opinion/recommendations for next steps in improving overall program.

The team met with counterparts from the Tirana department of Public Works to assign project roles and agree on overall program objectives. As part of an assessment of the existing Tirana collection system, the teams conducted an on-site evening tour of the garbage containers and observed collection routes and equipment. The assessment confirmed that Tirana's street litter problem is caused by inefficient equipment and inadequate garbage containers, as well as flawed routing.

To begin addressing operational issues of Tirana's street cleaning processes, in the period leading up to the fourth visit to Albania (July, 2006) the Tirana team will prepare baseline data essential for finding solutions to the current problems. The US team will receive a list of problems, concerns and desired outcomes in solid waste collection, a number of existing street containers by size and contract area, and a map showing delineated contract areas.

A second angle from which the issue of street cleaning is being approached is from a grassroots perspective. During this exchange, the teams held an in-depth discussion about existing citizen-level initiatives for cleaner neighborhoods with several donor-funded projects, such as Program Alternatives for Social Stimulus (PASS) and the Environmental Center for Development Education and Networking (EDEN) – programs that provide city-wide assistance in solid waste management/recycling. In the following three months, Tirana city staff will help form a street cleaning working group and provide contact information to Catawba and ICMA. Tirana will also help identify citizen participants to volunteer for a pilot cleaning area. The Albanian counterparts will map the pilot area's existing collection points, including receptacles along adjacent streets, and will provide business registrations by type. This effort is targeted at instilling a sense of ownership and participation on the part of Tirana's residents. Catawba will provide a vision statement to Tirana for the first meeting with citizen working groups. Then,

during the third exchange in July, the US team will help facilitate citizen working group discussions and will assist them in developing mission statements and action plans.

Another important activity initiated in this area is identification of a cleanliness scale as a measurement instrument of progress. The US team provided Tirana with a measurement scale used by New York City, NY, at a critical time of solid waste problems. Tirana will self-evaluate according to the scale and will continue to measure progress after the launching of operational improvements and citizen-led initiatives.

Transfer Station Planning Activities:

- To assess the Italian Government Sharra Landfill Grant/Loan project for synergies and employable resources.
- To provide a solid waste transportation plan with transfer station location(s), design and cost.

Under this component, the US team met with their Tirana counterparts and obtained extensive information on the guidelines of the Italian government loan. The US team also received and reviewed the engineering documents of the grant, which contain information about a possible transfer station location. Further planning for the transfer station will be done in conjunction with the identification of suitable sites for Tirana's new landfill.

Financing Methodologies Activities:

- To analyze the city's existing solid waste program budget and fee structure including private sector waste collection contracts.

The US team met with the Tirana Department of Finance and Administration and obtained and reviewed existing private street cleaning contracts. Recommendations for change will be drafted after the July partnership exchange.

Regional Landfill Planning Activities:

- To work with the Albanian Association of Municipalities (AAM) to host a national meeting of its members to review existing successful regional approaches to public service delivery.
- To work with the Albanian Association of Municipalities to ensure that the national governmental has awareness of and support for this activity.

The US team met with the AAM to seek assistance in developing regional approaches to solid waste management. Due to a currently complicated political situation in Tirana, a national meeting with Mayors was not held. The teams, however, managed to map out a detailed process for this work component. Importantly, the teams met with representatives from the Albanian Ministry of Public Works, Transportation, and Telecommunications: Mr. Lulzim Basha, Deputy Minister, Dr. Ing Stavri Ristani, and lead staff person, Vladimir Bezhani. The discussion revealed a strong interest in and support for a regional landfill in the Ministry.

Next steps in this area will be facilitated by ICMA's local implementer, IDRA, in conjunction with the AAM. IDRA will help interpret Albanian law that describes the legal structure of municipalities and lends legal capacities for joint control/ownership/management of regional solid waste (SW) utility service. Between this exchange and the next, IDRA will facilitate individual city discussions with potential city partners and will ask them to complete a SW questionnaire developed by ICMA and Catawba County. Answers from the questionnaire will help identify individual cities' levels of interest in such a regional initiative. During the third exchange in July, the Catawba team will facilitate a regional landfill workshop for a group of potential city partners. IDRA will also help lodge formal requests with the Albanian Geographic and Geologic Institutes for relevant mapping related to potential SW sites. To help further raise awareness of this initiative among national stakeholders and cultivate their support, IDRA will help develop contacts with the Albanian Minister of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications (PWTT).

C&D Initiative Activities

1. To provide a city map detailing current and future land use plans.
2. To provide all permit documentation related to construction/demolition activity.

During this exchange, the US team met with Mr. Shkelqim Bumci, Executive Director of the Albanian Builders Association, and Dritan Agolli, Director of Planning, City of Tirana, to discuss the need for a city-wide C&D facility. The meeting confirmed a great interest on the part of the business association to collaborate with the City of Tirana. Next steps are for Tirana to provide city map detailing, a current and future land use plan, and permit documentation related to construction/demolition activity in order to help identify sites for a prospective C&D site. Catawba will also develop a business plan for the future initiative and will help Tirana form a working group with interested businesses.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

N/A

IV. Projected Activities

A third partnership exchange will be held in July, 2006. Barry Edwards will visit Tirana in mid-May, and will focus his work in the area of regional landfill development.

Partnership: BCLP – Bulgarian Consortium for Local Economic Development

Reported period: October – December 2005

Program Manager: Kelly Niewenhous, kniewenhous@icma.org

FLGR Partnership Manager: Antoaneta Mateeva, amateeva@flgr.bg

Focus Area: Local Economic Development & Marketing

Funding Source: USAID/Sofia & G/ENV/UP

I. Introduction

Local Economic Development (LED) and Marketing has been a target area for almost all Bulgarian partnerships established through the Bulgaria Technical Twinning/Resource Cities Program (BRCP) since 1997. In the last few years, Local Economic Development was defined as a major priority by many Bulgarian local governments and it continues to be today. In the previous phase of BRCP (2002-2004), significant efforts and resources were devoted to enhance and further strengthen the local economic capacities of 14 Bulgarian municipalities through the establishment of a consortium with nine U.S. cities and the implementation of a large-scale Economic Development and Marketing Program for Bulgarian Municipalities. Uniting the efforts and resources of Bulgarian and U.S. cities resulted in the creation of the Bulgarian Local Economic Development Partnership (BLEDP), a broad network of leading Bulgarian municipalities and economic development specialists with strengthened capacities to provide professional services to businesses and to lead proactive economic development programs. To build upon the successes of the program, the new three-year phase will incorporate expansion and further development of the Local Economic Development Consortium and the BLEDP through the institutionalization of LED technical assistance, so that successful efforts in the region may continue following USAID graduation.

The goals of the three-year program are:

- To assist the consortium/BLEDP network to become more effective in working collectively and individually to bring economic development to their municipalities;
- To extend the program to **at least 25 additional cities**, increasing the awareness of the importance of local economic development among municipalities and bring a large number of municipalities into the consortium;
- To implement the certification program in the extended number of municipalities and prepare the advanced municipalities for certification with excellence;
- To develop the consortium into a strong platform to attract private investment to Bulgarian municipalities, thus create new job opportunities; and
- To institutionalize technical assistance and LED efforts to allow sustainability after USAID graduation.

II. Major Accomplishments this Period

During the reported period, a wide scope of activities have been initiated and accomplished towards implementation and further expansion and development of the Bulgarian Local Economic Development Program, which to date can be summarized as follows:

One of the most important accomplishments during this reporting period was the selection of “Round III” Bulgarian cities, which joined BLEDP. FLGR disseminated information for the possibility of expanding the Partnership in December 2006. The deadline for the first round of the application process, which included writing motivation letters stating why a city wanted to be part of the LED ICMA/FLGR initiative, was January 27. Fifty-five municipalities applied and forty-three completed the formal criteria on time and were invited to an orientation meeting on February 13. During this meeting, FLGR staff held four group interviews with the cities’ leadership to assess their vision and future commitment. After the meeting, 22 municipalities were eligible to fulfill the last and formal application form for participation, which had to be accompanied by a formal Municipal Council decision, a declaration on behalf of the Mayor and the Chair of Municipal council, a confirmation for the appointed LED specialist and his/her job description and existing marketing materials. FLGR staff reviewed application packages and choose ten cities to join the partnership: Plovdiv, Sevlievo, Svilengrad, Mezdra, Razlog, Strajica, Teteven, Kozlodui, Goce Delchev and Pravec. The remaining cities were notified in writing.

On January 24, all Round II and Round I cities (Mayors + LED specialists) met in Sofia where FLGR introduced the 2006 BLEDP general program, all attended topical and basic trainings and discussed 2006 certification possibilities and future technical assistance visits. FLGR gave the opportunity to all municipalities who were interested to apply for Excellence, re-certification or certification until March 10. Pleven applied for Excellence; Targovishte, Smolian and Aksakovo applied for basic certification, and Blagoevgrad applied for re-certification. FLGR reviewed their certification packages and planned visits for early June 2006.

On April 7, FLGR organized a partnership meeting with all ten new mayors. LED specialists participating in the basic training were also involved. The goals of the partnership meeting included providing additional information on the need for proactive leaders in LED policy, sharing American and Bulgarian practices with the Mayors, providing them information on future activities under the project, and allowing them time for joint discussions and questions for the FLGR staff about the program and their roles.

Throughout the quarter, ICMA continued to liaise with the US partners to finalize action plans, the training manual, technical assistance agendas, and internship opportunities for Bulgarian LED Specialists.

The first draft of the BLEDP business plan was developed and sent to ICMA, the US partner cities, and Jeff Finkle, Director of the International Economic Development Council, for comments. The draft outlined recruitment and sustainability efforts, as well as a budget for the annual conference and roles and responsibilities of the FLGR BLEDP Team. A second draft will be developed in the next quarter.

Following the action plan development, technical assistance teams from the US worked with old and new Bulgarian partners.

- David Humphreys, Director of Planning and Economic Development, West Carrollton, OH, worked in Gorna Malina to provide assistance to their initiative of “Building and Marketing an Industrial Park.”

- Steve Glueck, Director of Economic Development, Golden, CO, visited Yambol to work on “Applying Cost Benefit Analysis when Attracting New Businesses and Improvement of the Services Concerning New Investments.” Yambol’s initial action plan was updated and Mr. Glueck supported Yambol in their current efforts to attract a Japanese company. Mr. Glueck also visited Tryavna to continue efforts to develop and apply a marketing strategy for attracting investors’ interest in the construction of an open-air ethnographic museum in the municipality.
- John Cappelle, Economic Development Director, West Bend, WI, worked with Pazardjik and Rakovski to advise them on the development of a workforce development/retention program.
- Joe Roller, landscape architect, Kettering, OH, worked in Silistra on the continuation of the Techno-Aqua Park development and in Razgrad for the planning of Pchelina Park. He also assisted Gorna Oriahovitsa with the preliminary study and design of an industrial-logistic center and its establishment within the municipality;
- Charlottesville City Manager Gary O’Connell, Chief Financial Officer Aubrey Watts, and new Economic Development Director and new US participant Jim Tolbert, continued work in Pleven and assisted Lovech in the establishment of an industrial park. They also helped Kazanlak to establish an “Employer Club,” a dialogue between the local business and Kazanlak Municipality;
- The Auburn team, Phillip Dunlap, Megan McGowen, and Cary Cox, visited Ruse and worked on e-center planning and development.

Haskovo and Gabrovo applied for funding from the partnership support fund, using the opportunity given only to “Excellent” cities. Haskovo was awarded funding for “Development and Popularization of the North Industrial Zone-Haskovo” project. Gabrovo was given a grant for the development and optimal use of the Western Industrial Zone through improved access to lots within the zone, including repair of a municipal road to Voinovo residential areas and the Western Industrial Zone. Both projects will be partially funded by the municipality, a requirement of grant recipients.

Silistra finished the first phase of traffic planning for the Danube Business Park. Funding was provided through the partnership support fund for a camera to support their efforts when marketing the sites within the park as well as the available buildings and other sites in the city.

Dobrich sent the first draft of their marketing catalogue for the companies located in the “North” and “West” zones of the city, and it was reviewed by FLGR. Dobrich then started working on making the maps and shelters in the different zones. Their documents were reviewed and they were asked for additional information to support a potential grant award.

Business Inquiries and Marketing:

- During the quarter, two business inquiries were received at FLGR, including one from an American company. FLGR provided the necessary information to the prospect to support their efforts to relocate in Bulgaria.
- A Spanish investor requested FLGR conduct social economic research for his future investment plans, and this was accomplished successfully.

- FLGR staff worked closely with Yambol to support their attraction of a Japanese prospect, and also met with Vienna real estate show representatives to discuss the possible participation of Bulgarian Municipalities;
- FLGR undertook an assessment of Strajica's participation at the "Made in Bulgaria" exhibition in Sofia and conducted meetings concerning future opportunities.

Training:

The LED basic training modules provided by ICMA were further developed to include Bulgarian LED practices and experiences gathered throughout the implementation of the LED and Marketing for Bulgarian Municipalities Project. The modules were professionally edited and compiled in time for use at the basic training in April. Seven Bulgarian trainers, including three FLGR staff representatives and three LED professionals from Bulgarian municipalities provided input for finalizing the training modules and developed lesson plans for each of the modules. FLGR organized a TOT for the group of Bulgarian trainers and LED practitioners to enhance their capacity.

The development of lesson plans and PowerPoint presentations for the basic LED training course was facilitated by the Auburn economic development professionals, Phillip Dunlap, Economic Development Director, Megan McGowen, Deputy ED Director, and Cary Cox, Director of Workforce Development, thus preparing FLGR to carry out the responsibilities and play the role of a leading Bulgarian training organization in the field of LED beyond the CityLinks Program timeframe. Additional meetings with Bulgarian trainers were held in mid-March to further discuss the possible challenges and coordination efforts during the upcoming Basic Training.

John Capelle and Joe Roller conducted training on March 6 on *Grey/Brown Field Redevelopment and Marketing of Available Sites and Buildings* for participating municipalities. The training sessions delivered are scheduled to be formalized into the basic training manual.

Other Activities:

In the reported period, FLGR organized several follow-up meetings with USTDA. FLGR disseminated questionnaires to all BLEDP municipalities asking about important infrastructure and other projects to be assisted or financed by USTDA.

FLGR and LGI jointly implemented a project entitled, "Obstacles to Doing Business in Bulgaria." Special research was conducted, and on March 23 a roundtable was held to showcase best practices solving the problems recognized as large obstacles. FLGR staff and Municipalities working with FLGR under different projects presented their findings to the participants.

FLGR held a follow-up meeting with ASME to support the Bulgarian municipal participation in "Days of Bulgarian Regions in Russia." The FLGR project specialist also participated in a Public Private Partnership Training of Trainers, as well as a Training for Facilitators course.

LED staff participated in a meeting on EU future funding opportunities. Information was delivered by representatives of the Bulgarian ministries regarding the future management and monitoring of the funds.

A contract for future technical maintenance of www.invest.bg was signed. An assessment of the “bugs” was made by FLGR staff and the necessary information was sent to the web company.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

Due to time constraints with the Bulgarian and American partners, many technical assistance visits were scheduled simultaneously, making planning and preparation of the visits very difficult. Despite the tight scheduling, much was accomplished on the visits and the teams were able to work together to set a time for their next trips.

IV. Projected Activities

For the next quarter the following major events are planned:

- FLGR will continue to develop the business plan outlining the future of the LED organization, fee structure, and sustainability beyond the USAID-funded period. Jeff Finkle, Director of the International Economic Development Council, will also provide guidance to FLGR on planning the Annual LED conference scheduled for November 2006.
- The first one-week LED basic training that will be delivered by Bulgarian trainers is scheduled for the period April 2-7, 2006. The Advanced ED course, delivered by the Auburn team, will be held simultaneously.
- All participating municipalities will continue development of action plans for individual projects in cooperation with their US partners;
- FLGR will conduct meetings with state and municipal administrations and businesses to discuss the future of BLEDP and the various stakeholders' roles in the partnership;
- FLGR and ICMA will conduct a mid-term evaluation of the program activities and budget in order to plan for the next half of the program;
- FLGR will recruit and hire consultants to support the LED team efforts including training, certification visits, updating and revising the training manual, and providing technical assistance to municipalities;
- Technical assistance visits are planned to Vratsa and Montana by Brian McGowan, Economic Development Director, San Bernardino County, CA;
- Five Bulgarian LED officers will complete three-week internships in Kettering, OH, and Winchester, VA, where they will work side by side with their American colleagues in the local economic development departments to increase their understanding of various aspects of LED, as well as learn the role of LED officials in the US. They will work on joint projects and research and will incorporate their findings and new ideas into their work plans upon return;
- A second one-week basic training for all of the new participating municipalities will take place in June and will include an expanded schedule of course offerings from the recent April training. Bulgarian trainers will conduct the training with assistance from Auburn;

- The ten Round III municipalities will undertake their self-assessments of sites, buildings, resources, and other contributors to potential economic growth in their communities;
- Mentorship to new municipalities will continue with assistance from FLGR and the core municipalities.

Partnership: Replication of Infrastructure Management Best Practices
Veliko Turnovo, Plovdiv, Bulgaria – Golden, Colorado
Reported period: October- December 2005
Program Manager: Kelly Niewenhous, kniewenhous@icma.org
FLGR Partnership Manager: Antoaneta Mateeva, amateeva@flgr.bg
Focus Area: Replication of Best Practices in Infrastructure Management
Funding Source: USAID/Sofia & G/ENV/UP

II. Introduction

The partnership between Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria, and Golden, Colorado, was initiated in November 2000 during Phase III of the Bulgarian Technical Twinning Program/Bulgaria Resource Cities Program (BRCP). It was further expanded in Phase IV of the program through the successful replication of the asset and financial management plan of public infrastructure project, which was developed for the six districts of the City of Plovdiv. These projects increased the capacity of Veliko Turnovo and Plovdiv to prepare for and manage long-term infrastructure needs.

Many Bulgarian municipalities are currently facing the challenge of developing new and maintaining old urban infrastructure. Based on the Veliko Turnovo and Plovdiv's increased capacity, ICMA and FLGR decided to expand the replication of Infrastructure Management best practices in new Bulgarian municipalities to address their current needs. The three-year program will involve up to ten new Bulgarian municipalities and will build on and utilize the expertise of Veliko Turnovo and Plovdiv to ensure sustainability beyond the replicant cities.

In addition, the Veliko Turnovo/Plovdiv-Golden partnership has decided to continue to build on the successes of its earlier technical cooperation to develop a new project in the field of infrastructure management. The new project's focus is bridge maintenance in the City of Plovdiv and the City of Veliko Turnovo and the development of a financial management plan to provide for their safe usage. The new project is related to bridge inventory and the development of a financial plan for maintenance and replacement. The inventory should include an estimate of current sufficiency, expected life and traffic safety. The project will be jointly developed with assistance of Golden technical experts and will include up to ten bridges in Plovdiv and six in Veliko Turnovo. The project's development and implementation will build on U.S. best practices applied in the Bulgarian environment, thus expanding the exchange of expertise in the area of infrastructure management, identified as major area for cooperation in the previous rounds of program implementation.

II. Major Accomplishments this Period

There were several technical exchanges in the reported period paid by new replicant cities to the mentoring cities of Plovdiv, Veliko Turnovo, and Svistov. There were no technical exchanges on behalf of the US experts to Bulgaria. The reported period was dedicated to the following:

Replication Activities:

The Municipality of Svistov conducted a public hearing to present the results from project development to the Municipal Council and to the public. The public hearing was prepared with the assistance and conducted with the participation of the mentor City of Plovdiv. The public hearing resulted in better public awareness concerning the importance of repairs and reconstruction needed for public infrastructure in accordance with the financial plan, thus preparing for its approval by the municipal council.

Start-Up Activities

With regard to project replication of the new group of six Bulgarian municipalities (Berkovitsa, Sevlievo, Troyan, Ruen, Svilengrad, Gorna Oriahovitsa), action plans were developed by the municipalities of Berkovitsa, Sevlievo, Svilengrad, and Gorna Oriahovitsa. The Municipality of Svistov committed to providing assistance as a mentor city to the Municipality of Gorna Oriahovitsa.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

N/A

IV. Projected Activities

Replication Activities:

New replicant cities in Round 2 of replication will start working toward project development in their respective cities by preparing for and doing the inventory of pavement deterioration of streets and sidewalks.

Strengthening the Capacity of Bulgarian Experts:

FLGR will organize a TOT in early May for Bulgarian trainers who provide training for further project replication. This will prepare the trainers to deliver trainings more effectively and build their presentation and teaching skills.

There is one international exchange scheduled for June. Dan Hartman, from Golden, CO, will assist with street evaluations in the new participant municipalities in order to increase the capacity of the newly participating engineers as well as the mentors' capacity to assist other with the street evaluations. The Municipalities may also consult with Hartman on their databases, financial plans, and presentations to Council. Technical exchanges will be made on behalf of Bulgarian mentors and new replicant cities' representatives.

Partnership: Replication of Waste Management Best Practices

Reported period: October- December 2005

Program Manager: Kelly Niewenhous, kniewenhous@icma.org

FLGR Partnership Manager: Antoaneta Mateeva, amateeva@flgr.bg

Focus Area: Environmental Protection

Funding Source: USAID/Sofia & G/ENV/UP

I. Introduction

The successful implementation of the pilot composting program in the municipalities of Tundja, Boliarovo, and Elhovo in Phase IV of the Bulgaria Resource Cities Program (BRCP) raised a great deal of interest among other Bulgarian municipalities, including rural communities. As they are all facing common challenges regarding solid waste management, the composting program is seen as one of the solutions to improving solid waste management in rural areas. At the same time, through the participation in Phase IV of the Bulgaria Resource Cities Program and through the successful implementation of the Pilot Composting program in their own municipalities, Boliarovo and Tundja increased their capacity in solid waste management. They are committed to improving their waste management program through further expansion of the composting program in their municipalities and are eager to share their knowledge and experiences with other Bulgarian municipalities that would be interested in replicating the composting program. To that end, the three-year CityLinks replication program will involve 15 new Bulgarian municipalities and will build on and utilize the expertise of Boliarovo and Tundja to ensure sustainability beyond the program's conclusion.

II. Major Accomplishments This Period

The reported period was dedicated to start-up activities for the second round of project replication. ASECOB conducted a meeting with the five new replicant cities of Chirpan, Radnevo, Rakovski, Kneja, and Pravets to discuss specific aspects of further project development and replication. As a result of the discussion, each of the five municipalities developed an action plan. Program participants demonstrated readiness to co-finance planned project activities while developing the budgets as part of the Action Plans.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

N/A

IV. Projected Activities

Newly selected replicant cities in round 2 of replication will start establishing the composting sites and will equip them with containers for solid waste. The available educational leaflet will be revised, refined and printed for dissemination among citizens. There are no international exchanges scheduled for the next quarter. Technical exchanges will be made on behalf of Bulgarian mentors and the new replicant cities' representatives. ASECOB will continue to take an active role in capacity building and mentoring.

CityLinks Partnership: Russia Far East (RFE) - Alaskan Cities

Start Date: September 2005

Partnership Manager: Kelly Niewenhous, kniewenhous@icma.org

Focus Area: Local Economic Development

Funding Source: USAID/Russia

I. Introduction

The two-year Alaska Partnership Program will establish technical partnerships between communities in the Russia Far East (RFE) region of the country and Alaskan cities and organizations to provide access to hands-on technical assistance and use peer-to-peer learning as the basic means of knowledge transfer. The program will take advantage of existing successful local economic development (LED) practices that are already in place in Russia Far East to provide a valuable basis to initiate comprehensive community LED efforts in RFE partner communities. The program will build upon partnerships that currently exist between RFE communities and Alaskan cities and organizations.

The CityLinks RFE program will provide hands-on technical assistance, training and focused exchanges with other communities, complemented by targeted project assistance funding. The program will take place in three stages:

1. Three to four RFE cities will be identified and matched with appropriate Alaskan partners based on the needs of the RFE cities and the expertise of the Alaskan local governments.
2. In the second stage, the models and practices identified by these partnerships will be showcased and transferred to other cities in the region through mentorship, roundtable discussion and other information dissemination.
3. Finally, partnerships will be scaled up and clusters will be established. New cities will join the program and peer-to-peer learning will begin.

The CityLinks RFE program will support and enhance social and economic reforms in the Far East and will address several cross-cutting issues such as gender and youth and infrastructure development. The program will build more sustainable and self-dependent communities that will be able to address the chronic economic development needs of their citizens and private sector partners.

II. Major Accomplishments this Period

In January, ICMA confirmed its partnership with the Counterpart Enterprise Fund (CEF) in Khabarovsk, Russia, to support the program administratively and technically. CEF staff supporting the program includes a financial manager and full-time program assistant. ICMA also hired two full-time coordinators to work with the participating RFE cities.

Four Alaskan cities passed City Council resolutions committing to the program: Anchorage, Juneau, Wasilla, and Kenai, and each committed staff to the first exchange. An online orientation was held by ICMA/Washington and the staff in Khabarovsk in mid-February to

orient the Alaskan cities to the program and outline the goals, structure, and Russian legal and business environment.

Also in February, Eugene Levkin, USAID/Russia, traveled to Alaska with an ICMA Technical Advisor to identify the resources and opportunities for linkages each city is bringing to the program, including economic development councils, private businesses, Chambers of Commerce, university groups, as well as identifying the cities' strengths in LED and past/ongoing projects from which their counterparts in Russia may learn. The visit confirmed that each Alaskan city is enthusiastic about the program and the upcoming work, and that each has unique resources that will be beneficial for Russia.

In late March, ICMA held the kick-off LED workshop and orientation in Khabarovsk, Russia. All the Alaskan and Russian participating cities were in attendance, as well as others from local NGOs and USAID. The two-day training and orientation for the Russian cities focused on basic local economic development and featured presentations from US practitioners and the Institute for Urban Economics in Moscow on such topics as the Russian legal framework and economic development, principals and practices of local economic and community development. The Russian participants were oriented to the goals and structure of the program, and at the end of the two day kick-off each participant signed Memoranda of Understanding showing their commitment to the program. The Alaskan partners were also presented with information about the implications of Law 131 on local economic development in municipalities by the Far East Center for Local Governance.

Immediately following the kick-off event, the Alaskan partners accompanied their Russian counterparts back to their respective cities for a week-long diagnostic visit in which the partners identified the opportunities and challenges facing each city and a specific project in each to undertake together. Each team drafted an action plan for implementation to be completed on the first exchange to Alaska. Projects include establishment of a business incubator; development of a municipal business plan to increase investment; development of the tourism sector, including services, infrastructure, and marketing; and creation of a special economic area (technology-business park) and a marketing plan to attract investment.

III. Challenges/Remedial Actions Taken

It has been ICMA's policy to request B-1 visas for visitors on the CityLinks Programs. USAID now requires all visitors to the US to obtain J-1 visas, which take considerably longer to process and receive. Therefore, the need to have names and dates for upcoming exchanges well in advance (12 weeks) is critical. As travelers are directly contingent upon the task necessary for program implementation at each stage, ICMA will carefully monitor program process to ensure the exchanges and work progress evenly and that people obtain the necessary visas to travel.

IV. Projected Activities

In the next quarter, the partnership teams will finalize their action plans and begin implementation. The first exchange to Alaska is tentatively set for June 2006 for all partnerships

and will include mayors and economic development directors from the Russian partner cities. ICMA Russia-based staff will also accompany several of the groups to Alaska.